



**Frederick
William
Faber**



BETHLEHEM

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BETHLEHEM Frederick William Faber

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There are several ways in which we may treat of the mysteries of the Three-and-Thirty Years of our dearest Lord. We may look at each of them singly, as it is in itself, full of grace and beauty, and distinctively unlike any other. Secondly, we may gather them up into departments, and call them the joyful, the sorrowful, and the glorious mysteries, the three sets differing thus from each other, and, in the unity of each set, each mystery having its own distinctness. Or, thirdly, we may view them as clustering in constellations, and yet these constellations unities, as the Childhood, the Hidden Life, the Public Ministry, the Passion, and the Risen Life or Great Forty Days. Each of these constellations has a more perfect unity than the divisions of mysteries according to their joyous, sorrowful, or glorious character, while at the same time the single mysteries, which compose the unities, have also a greater variety. Fourthly, we have much to learn by putting out of view the separate mysteries, and studying the contrasts and comparisons of those five constellations one with another. It is hard to say whether their analogies or diversities are the most full of theology and devotion.

The following Treatise is a specimen of the third method of considering the Thirty-Three Years, united, where it was naturally suggested, with the fourth. In my own mind, probably from a poetical habit of localizing things, I have become accustomed to know those Five Constellations of Mysteries by the names of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Calvary, and Gennesareth, names which will be seen at once to be only approximately true, yet sufficiently so for my purpose. I must also warn you, and through you my readers, that there are parts of the Treatise liable to be misunderstood without the reading of the whole. In all other respects it will explain itself, and I confide it to your indulgence and theirs, praying our Blessed Lord, if He sees fit, to allow it to quicken and brighten the fires of Christmas in child-like hearts. (Summary by Prefatory Epistle)

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